

1/04/2010 This Week in Congress

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January 4, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you and your family had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Senate Passes Health Care Legislation

The Senate passed Majority Leader Harry Reid's health care reform bill by a vote of 60-39 on Christmas Eve. I am opposed to this legislation and offended that the writing of this bill was driven by deal-making, personal handouts and political payoffs instead of reasonable public policy. At a time when Congress should be working to reduce health care costs and increase accessibility, this legislation does the opposite. Health care reform must make quality coverage more affordable and accessible and allow those who like their current coverage to keep it. Unfortunately, this bill will not accomplish these objectives.

In addition, the deal reached between Majority Leader Reid and several senators results in some states being treated differently than others. The special treatment given to Florida, Louisiana and Nebraska will heap excessive burdens and costs on Kansans. Federal taxpayers are expected to have to pay \$100 million over the next 10 years to cover the costs

for all new Medicaid enrollees in Nebraska alone. I have called on the Kansas Attorney General to pursue a legal challenge to these provisions should this legislation become law.

While both the House of Representatives and the Senate have approved health care reform legislation, the two bills are different and no legislation has been sent to the President. I am hopeful Americans will continue to make their voices heard and that this costly and damaging legislation will be stopped. [Click here to read more.](#)

Big First Listening Tour Concludes in Home

On Tuesday, December 29th, I concluded my 13th annual Big First Listening Tour, "From Washington to Home," with a town hall meeting in the community of Home, located in Marshall County. Between December 22nd, and December 29th, I held town hall meetings in Greeley, Wichita, Stanton, Grant, Kearny, Hamilton and Marshall Counties. Before my town hall meeting in Grant County on December 28th, I stopped at KULY Radio, Bob Wilson Memorial Hospital, Ace Hardware, Russ Food Center, City Hall and Dirks Anthony & Duncan CPAs.

During these town hall meetings, folks visited with me about the increase in government spending and the accompanying growth in the size of government-represented by bailouts, stimulus packages, cap and trade legislation, government intervention in health care and other damaging legislative proposals. The growth of government, represented by these bills, threatens our way of life and makes it more difficult to have prosperity and leave things better for the next generation. I also visited with Kansans about Environmental Protection Agency regulations, No Child Left Behind, food safety and illegal immigration. Thanks to all who took time to attend a town hall meeting during this year's tour.

Learning about Health Care in Jefferson County

As Chairman of the Rural Health Care Coalition, I visited the F.W. Huston Medical Center in Winchester on Tuesday, December 29th, to learn about the specific challenges the hospital faces in meeting the health care needs of those in this Kansas county. Like most small, rural hospitals, Medicare reimbursements are critically important to F.W. Huston Medical Center. Provisions of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's health care reform bill would make delivering care in rural areas more challenging. Any health care reform legislation must address the unique health care needs of rural communities and help rural hospitals deliver quality, affordable care. Thanks to CEO LaMont Cook for visiting with me about health care in Jefferson County.

Speaking to Civic Club Members in Fort Scott and Russell

In communities across our state, Kansans are working together to make their towns stronger. Participation in civic clubs helps make this happen. I spoke to members of civic clubs in Fort Scott and Russell on Wednesday, December 30th, and Thursday, December 31st, about recent congressional activity. Like most Kansans, those in Fort Scott and Russell are concerned about the health care legislation that passed the Senate, government spending and cap and trade legislation.

Thank you to the members of the Kiwanis Clubs and Rotary Clubs in both towns for their participation in their communities and for attending these meetings. Special thanks to Anne Emerson of Fort Scott and Harry Hunsley of Russell for their hospitality.

Attending College Basketball Game at FHSU

My family and I attended the men's college basketball game between Washburn University and Fort Hays State University on Wednesday, December 30th. The FHSU Tigers, which are ranked number 13th in the nation in Division II play, defeated the Ichabods 68-55. I enjoyed the opportunity to watch a well-played game and visit with many of those in attendance. Thanks to FHSU President Edward Hammond and Athletic Director Curtis Hammeke for their hospitality.

Celebrating the New Year in Wichita

My wife, Robba, and I rang in the New Year in Wichita on Thursday, December 31st, at the INTRUST Bank Arena Pre-Party. The newly constructed INTRUST Bank Arena, located in downtown Wichita, opens later this month and will host sporting events, concerts and conventions. INTRUST Bank Arena has the largest seating capacity of any arena in the state and is the new home of the Wichita Thunder ice hockey team. Guests at the party were able to see this impressive 15,000-seat facility that will benefit the community. Thanks to Lyndon Wells for hosting me and Charlie Chandler and Chris Presson for their hospitality.

Amnesty Proposal Must be Defeated

Recent reports indicate President Obama will support immigration legislation this year that will provide amnesty to illegal immigrants. I am strongly opposed to any legislation that would create an amnesty program rewarding illegal immigration. President Obama is proposing another disastrous idea that will further bankrupt the country.

While I believe the federal government has failed when it comes to immigration, amnesty is not the answer. Amnesty legislation would only encourage more illegal immigration. The first priority must be to make sure our borders are secure.

In addition to protecting the borders, the bureaucracy needs to be reformed to produce a fair and efficient immigration agency that encourages compliance with our laws so that those who wish to come to the United States legally are able to do so in an appropriate manner.

Mourning the Loss of Dr. Ginger Senseman of Salina

I attended the memorial service for Dr. Ginger Senseman on Saturday, January, 2nd, at First Presbyterian Church in Salina. Dr. Senseman passed away at the young age of 40 on December 28th after a battle with breast cancer. Educated at the University of Kansas Medical School, Ginger became a pediatrician and practiced in Salina at Salina Pediatric Care. I had the pleasure to know Dr. Senseman and learn from her about the challenges doctors in our state face. My thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Greg, their two sons and the rest of the family.

Topeka Farm Show Begins Tomorrow

I will have an information booth at the 2010 Topeka Farm Show at the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka to provide information about congressional actions that affect agriculture. This year's Farm Show will run from Tuesday, January 5th, through Thursday, January 7th. Members of my staff will be available to answer questions at booth A-17-1 throughout the three-day event. [Click here](#) for more information about the Topeka Farm Show.

Very truly yours,

Jerry